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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Many speakers call for indefinite extension of Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as 1995 Review and Extension Conference begins general debate.

+ Secretary-General to pay official visits to Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand and Fiji during three-week tour; will also attend Victory Day parades in Paris and Moscow.

+ France warns it will withdraw peace-keepers if situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not improve; urges measures to enable UNPROFOR to implement its mandate, and resumption of negotiations by Bosnian parties.

+ UNPROFOR says responsibility for deaths of two French peace-keepers in Sarajevo cannot be determined conclusively.

+ Security Council should minimize unintended adverse side-effects of future sanctions on vulnerable populations, five permanent members say.

+ Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs to visit Cambodia to discuss continued United Nations human rights presence there.

+ Special Envoy for Tajikistan expected to convene meeting of Tajik parties in Moscow tomorrow.

+ Security Council should maintain strict control over implementation of peace-keeping mandates, Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations is told.

+ Germany, Netherlands and United Kingdom pledge $1.9 million for United Nations Guards in Iraq; United States earmarks $1.1 million from frozen Iraqi assets.

+ Commission for Social Development concludes consideration of international development plans and programmes; discusses follow-up to Copenhagen Summit.

For information media—not an official record

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The 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) today began its general debate, and heard many calls for the Treaty's indefinite extension. The Foreign Minister of France, Alain Juppe, said the European Union was committed to the indefinite and unconditional extension of the NPT. It was in the interest of the international community to counter the proliferation of nuclear weapons, to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to continue the process of disarmament. Export controls were essential to non-proliferation, he added.

The Foreign Minister of Germany, Klaus Kinkel, said that while the NPT was not flawless, its extension should not be made conditional. Such a move would only play into the hands of those who sought a pretext for their own nuclear ambitions. United Kingdom Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd said the Treaty had its imperfections, but none amounted to a fatal flaw. While it might appear to discriminate between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States, a firm distinction had been drawn between them in order to contain proliferation.

Nigeria's Foreign Minister, Tom Ikimi, warned that glossing over the failures of the Treaty and extending it indefinitely would be an invitation to nuclear disorder. "If the nuclear-arms race has abated due to the transformation in the international system, we have yet to see the commencement of a concrete step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons", he said. Nigeria supported the extension of the Treaty for a fixed period, with the proviso that it would not lapse at the end of that period.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will leave New York tomorrow on a three-week tour, during which he will pay official visits to Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. The Secretary-General will address the fortieth anniversary commemoration of the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, the Global Conference on Cultural Diversity in Sydney, and a Conference on the Future of the United Nations in Melbourne. He will also attend the Victory Day parades in Paris and Moscow.

The Secretary-General had numerous appointments today, including a meeting with the President of Brazil. He also met with the Foreign Ministers of France, Nigeria, Japan. Germany, Belarus, Norway, South Africa and Egypt.

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The present situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is intolerable and could lead to the withdrawal of French peace-keepers, according to French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe. He told correspondents at Headquarters today that the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was unable to fulfill its mission. Its peace-keepers were being murdered, sometimes by the people they were there to protect. He added that there were strong reasons to believe that one of

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the two French troops killed in Sarajevo over the weekend had been shot by a Bosnian sniper.

The situation could not be allowed to continue, and France had called an emergency meeting of the Security Council to work on a draft resolution covering three points, the Foreign Minister continued. The draft would invite the Secretary-General to submit proposals on measures to strengthen UNPROFOR to enable it to implement its mandate. It would also require an extension of the cessation of hostilities agreement -- which expires at the end of this month -- and would call on the Bosnian parties to resume negotiations for a political settlement.

In order to implement the resolution if adopted, France would request a ministeral meeting of the Contact Group, he said. The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia would be also asked to arrange a meeting of the parties to resume the stalled dialogue. If those initiatives did not yield satisfactory results within a reasonable period of time, France would have to withdraw its troops from UNPROFOR.

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The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) has been unable to conclusively determine who was responsible for the deaths of two French troops in Sarajevo over the weekend. A United Nations spokesman said both peace-keepers were within range of sniper fire from Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Government positions when they were killed.

From UNPROFOR's perspective, the investigation into the killings was closed, the spokesman went on to say. Both incidents remained classified as "unattributed cease-fire violations".

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The Security Council should minimize the unintended adverse side-effects of any future sanctions on the most vulnerable sections of targeted countries, according to its five permanent members. China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States made that comment in a non-paper on the humanitarian impact of sanctions. It was transmitted to the President of the Council in a letter dated 13 April.

The structure and implementation of any future sanctions regime might vary according to the resource base of the targeted country, the non-paper said. That would require an objective assessment of the short- and long-term consequences of sanctions. The more information the Council and sanctions committees had on the humanitarian situation in a target country, the better. In that respect, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should have a coordinating role. It should draw on the expertise and assistance of States, agencies, international bodies and non-governmental organizations, and report to sanctions committees. The committees could refer certain matters to the Council, such as recommendations requiring changes to resolutions.

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In case of emergencies or force majeure situations, the Council and/or the committees might review the application of sanctions and take appropriate actions, the permanent members said. Sanctions regimes should provide for unimpeded access to humanitarian aid. Targeted States should be discouraged from impeding humanitarian aid and encouraged to render assistance in that respect. Procedures for consideration of humanitarian applications by sanctions committees should be as expeditious as possible. The simplest possible authorization procedures should be developed in the case of essential humanitarian supplies. Clearly defined categories of medical supplies and foodstuffs should be allowed to be supplied even without notification of the relevant committees.

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The Secretary-General has asked the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Marrack Goulding, to visit Cambodia for discussions on the continued presence there of the Office of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. Those discussions were initiated at a meeting between the Secretary-General and the Second Prime Minister of Cambodia, Samdech Hun Sen, on 20 March.

Following consultations with the Royal Government of Cambodia, it has been agreed that Mr. Goulding will visit Phnom Penh from 4 to 6 May. He will be accompanied by a member of the Centre for Human Rights.

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The Special Envoy for Tajikistan, Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, is expected to convene a meeting of the Tajik parties in Moscow tomorrow, according to a United Nations spokesman. The meeting will focus on extending the current cease-fire beyond 26 April, and on setting a date for the fourth round of inter-Tajik talks.

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The Security Council should maintain strict control over the implementation of peace-keeping mandates, the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations heard today as it continued its general debate. Zimbabwe said some peace-keeping operations had tended to acquire additional or even different mandates, which were not necessarily in line with their original objectives. The respective areas of responsibility of political and military authorities must be clearly defined.

Thailand said peace-keeping operations should be guided by the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter -- full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, and non-intervention in their internal affairs. Pakistan stressed that peace-keeping operations should remain in place until the causes of the conflicts in question had been resolved.

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Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have pledged a total of $1.9 million to finance the activities of the United Nations Guards Contingent in Iraq (UNGCI), according to the Department for Humanitarian Affairs. In addition, the United States has earmarked $1.1 million in matching funds for the United Nations Escrow Account, from frozen Iraqi assets held in the country. That brings the amount made available for the Guards Contingent to $3.1 million.

The pledges were made at meetings convened by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Peter Hansen, on 3 and 11 April. Due to funding constraints, the strength of the Guards Contingent decreased in recent months from 150 to 62. Mr. Hansen expressed concern at the tense security situation in northern Iraq, and emphasized that the Guards were needed to protect United Nations personnel and humanitarian operations.

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The Commission for Social Development yesterday concluded its consideration of international plans and programmes of action relating to social development. Among the topics discussed were the rights and duties of the family, violence among youth, and the needs of the disabled and older persons.

The representative of Sudan said youth violence was caused by political, economic and social factors. However, some States were tackling the problem as a security and safety issue, and were directing violence against young people. He called for dialogue and participation to help solve such problems. The United States representative said every State should adopt laws supporting the basic legal and human rights of persons with disabilities. The United Nations should hold Member States accountable for implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, he added.

The Commission later began consideration of its input to the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. The Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen contain recommendations to the Economic and Social Council which affect the work of the Commission. Specifically, the Council is called on to review the Commission's mandate, agenda and composition.

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